

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SS-15 SP-02 H-01
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O R 031416Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7857
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2503

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINS, LE, PLO, MOPS

SUBJ: INCIDENTS IN SOUTH LEBANON

1. EMBOFF MET WITH ILMAC CHAIRMAN ESPINASSY (PLEASE PROTECT) ON MAY 3, WHO GAVE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF RECENT EVENTS IN TYRE AREA:

2. ON MAY 2 THERE HAD BEEN THREE INCIDENTS INVOLVING FRENCH IN TYRE AREA (SEE DATT IR FOR MORE COMPLETE DETAILS).

A. FRENCH BARRACKS WAS HIT BY INDIRECT FIRE, PROBABLY MORTARS, AND SEVEN FRENCH SOLDIERS WERE WOUNDED.

B. GUERILLAS AMBUSHED FRENCH ARMORED CAR, KILLING THREE FRENCH SOLDIERS.

C. GUERILLAS AMBUSHED SMALL CONVOY CARRYING FRENCH COMMANDER COLONEL SALVAN AND FATAH MAJOR MOHAMAD TAMRAZ AS THEY WERE COMING BACK FROM MEETING WITH PLO. SALVAN, WHO WAS RIDING WITH TAMRAZ IN A PLO VEHICLE, WAS SEVERELY WOUNDED. (ESPINASSY COMMENTED THAT SALVAN MIGHT NEVER WALK AGAIN AND THAT UNDER BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD

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NOT DO SO FOR AT LEAST ONE YEAR.) TAMRAZ WAS "VERY LIGHTLY WOUNDED", AND THE PLO DRIVER WAS KILLED. A FRENCH SOLDIER RIDING IN A JEEP BEHIND THE PLO CAR WAS BRIEFLY MISSING BUT WAS FOUND LATER. HE HAD BEEN WOUNDED. THE VEHICLE WAS NOT RECOVERED.

3. ESPINASSY NOTED THAT THERE WAS STILL SOME CONFUSION

OVER EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED IN TYRE AREA. IN THIS REGARD, ANOTHER WELL-INFORMED U.N. SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF THAT FOUR FRENCH SOLDIERS HAD BEEN KILLED; THREE IN THE AMBUSH ON THE ARMORED CAR AND ONE IN THE ATTACK ON THE BARRACKS, AND SEVEN WOUNDED; ONE IN THE ARMORED CAR AMBUSH AND SIX IN THE ATTACK ON THE BARRACKS.

4. ESPINASSY SAID THAT UNIFIL DID NOT KNOW WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ATTACKS, BUT DOUBTED THAT IT WAS FATAH SINCE SALVAN WAS IN A PLO VEHICLE. FATAH HERE IN BEIRUT HAD CLAIMED REJECTION FRONT WAS RESPONSIBLE.

5. ESPINASSY BELIEVED THERE WERE SEVERAL REASONS FOR INCIDENT.

A. RETALIATION FOR TWO LEBANESE LEFTISTS KILLED ON APRIL 30 BY FRENCH NEAR TYRE.

B. INCREASED PALESTINIAN INFILTRATION THROUGH U.N. LINES IN WAKE OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND FACT THAT FRENCH FORCES WERE ONLY UNIFIL CONTINGENT AGGRESSIVELY PREVENTING INFILTRATION OF PALESTINIANS. ALL OTHER CONTINGENTS, HE CLAIMED, WERE ALLOWING PALESTINIANS TO PASS, EXCEPT NORWEGIANS, WHO WERE NOT CONFRONTED WITH PROBLEM SINCE THEY WERE IN AREA WITH CHRISTIAN MILITIA.

C. LOCATION OF TYRE WHICH WAS VITAL ENTRY PASSAGE FOR PALESTINIANS.

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5. IN ADDITION TO ABOVE INCIDENTS, GUERILLAS KILLED ONE SENEGALESE SOLDIER SOUTH OF TYRE ON MAY 2, AND CAPTURED TEN OTHERS. TEN PRISONERS WERE RELEASED FOLLOWING DAY. MEANWHILE, ONE CIVILIAN BRITISH FIELD SERVICE OFFICER, COLIN RODKER, WHO HAD LEFT BEIRUT ON MAY 2 FOR NAQURA, WAS MISSING.

6. ESPINASSY WAS DEEPLY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT UNIFIL ABILITY TO FULFIL ITS FUNCTION. HE RECALLED THAT HE HAD WARNED THAT PALESTINIANS WOULD ATTEMPT TO CROSS PALESTINIAN LINES (SEE BEIRUT 2041), AND THAT THIS WAS LIKELY TO CAUSE A CRISIS. ESPINASSY (WHO IS FRENCH) SAID THAT IN ORDER FOR UNIFIL TO FULFILL ITS MISSION: (A) BOTH THE NUMBER OF SOLDIERS AND THE TYPE OF ARMAMENT ASSIGNED TO UNIFIL WOULD HAVE TO BE INCREASED; AND (B) ALL UNIFIL CONTINGENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE INSTRUCTED TO USE FORCE IF NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THEIR MISSION. PARKER

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